



Senior Airman Justin Langley, 90th Security Forces Squadron, and his dog, Paco, practice training scenarios on base Tuesday. Paco is one of eight highly-trained military working dogs who call Warren home.

Photos by Airman 1st Class Tessa Cubbon

Man's best friends keep Warren safe

**Senior Airman
Lauren Hasinger Sixbey**
Public affairs

Barely blinking he stands with his handler. He spots a man wandering in the distance. He hears yelling from both men. Finally he hears what he's been waiting for and is let go. He charges full speed toward the man in question. Another command is given and he stops dead in his tracks. Never taking an eye off the suspicious man, he's ready to strike.

This is a training scenario for Warren's eight military working dogs: Bono, Boss, Castor, Juma (the only female), Lando, Paco, Ringo and Zak.

The dogs, purchased in Europe for \$1,500 to \$3,000, began their Air Force career at Lackland AFB, Texas.

They spent about a year there training to become either a drug dog or a bomb dog. Fully trained, the dogs are worth \$35,000 to \$45,000.

Their primary mission here is explosive and drug detection, according to Tech. Sgt. Christopher Wright, 90th Security Forces Squadron kennel master.

In addition to their training, they work the same shift as their

handler, usually 12 hours a day, four days a week. The dogs also do building searches and scouting for people.

"He's the driving force of my job," said Staff Sgt. Tim Evans, handler of 8-year-old Lando. "I couldn't do it without him."

Sergeant Wright said growing attached to the dogs is part of the job.

"We absolutely get attached to the dogs. That's who we work with every day," he said.

The same is true for Sergeant Evans.

"We have a pretty good bond. It's like we're best friends. I work with him all the time every day," said Sergeant Evans, who has been Lando's handler for two years.

Though it took them six months to build a rapport with one another, the two couldn't be closer.

During the presidential debates last year, Sergeant Evans and Lando were sent to Miami to provide support to the Secret Service. It was, as Sergeant Evans put it, their best experience together.

Once again the two will have the opportunity to experience life and work outside of Warren's gates.

Sergeant Evans and Lando,

along with, Senior Airman Justin Langley, his dog Paco, Senior Airman Brandon Cummmiford, his dog Ringo, team trainer Staff Sgt. Scott Yeager and Sergeant Wright will deploy soon. There they will work vehicle search areas doing bomb detection.

Deployments aren't uncommon for the dogs. Paco, who returned from Iraq in November, has been deployed two other times, while Lando and Ringo have both gone four times.

They stay with each other as long as the Airman is assigned to Warren. With the exception of deployments and temporary duty assignments, the dogs remain here their entire career.

The dogs will retire when they reach age 10 to 13. If they are not too aggressive they may be adopted, normally by one who has experience working with K-9s, according to Sergeant Wright.

Though they know the importance of their job and take it very seriously, the Airmen of the military working dog section also appreciate how good they have it.

"This isn't a job for me. I get to come to work and play with dogs all day," said Sergeant Evans. "I have the best job in the Air Force."



Paco and his handler, Senior Airman Justin Langley, 90th Security Forces Squadron train here Tuesday.



Above: Military Working Dog Paco runs during a training session here Tuesday.

Left: Senior Airman Brandon Cummmiford and Ringo; Staff Sgt. Tim Evans and Lando; Senior Airman Justin Langley and Paco pose for a picture Tuesday. The three Airmen and their dogs will deploy soon for six months. They are part of the 90th Security Forces Squadron Military Working Dog section.

